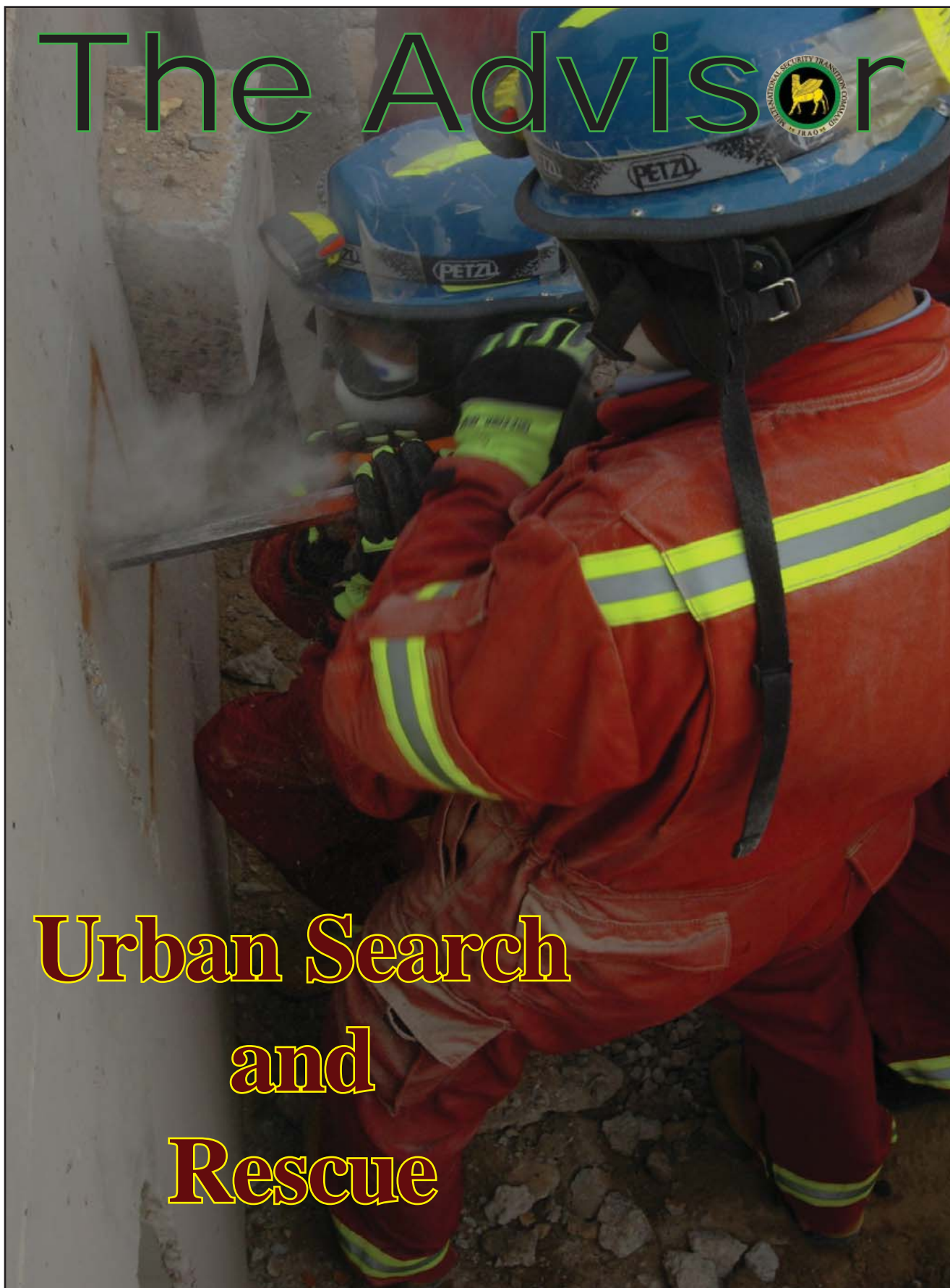


The Advisor



Urban Search and Rescue



Official Weekly Report for the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq

THE ADVISOR

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The faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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ON THE COVER

Firefighters chisel through a cement wall during their urban rescue training in Basrah Feb. 3.

Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Bush says Baghdad Security Plan on track

By Fred W. Baker III

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Baghdad security plan is on track, and the Iraqi government is meeting benchmarks necessary for continued Coalition cooperation, President Bush said Feb. 14.

Bush received his first briefing from new Multi-national Force Iraq Commander, U.S. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the president's top pick to lead coalition forces in Iraq, Bush told reporters at a White House news conference. Petraeus took command Feb. 10.

The security plan is taking shape, and the Iraqi government is following through on its commitment to deploy three additional brigades of Iraqi forces to the capital city of Baghdad, Bush said.

He added that Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has his top commander in place and forces are busy setting up a command-and-control headquarters in Baghdad. Bush cautioned, though, that the plan is in its early stages.

"The operation to secure Baghdad is going to take time and there will be violence," Bush said. "These are people that will kill innocent men, women and children to achieve their object, to discourage the Iraqi people, to foment sectarian violence, and to, frankly, discourage us from helping this government do its job."

Recent suicide bombings demonstrate there is an active strategy to undermine the Iraqi government and its Baghdad security plan, Bush said. He also said the recent surge in violence illustrates that failure

by the Coalition forces to secure Baghdad would have devastating consequences on both the Iraqi and the American people.

"If you think the violence is bad now, imagine what it would look like if we don't help them secure the capital city of Baghdad," he said.

If the Iraqi government falls, chaos will follow and the vacuum will be filled with extremists who pose a threat to our national security, he said.

"To step back from the fight in Baghdad would have disastrous consequences for the people in America," Bush said. "I believe that success in Baghdad will help us have success in helping us secure the homeland."

"What is different about this conflict than some others is that if we fail there the enemy will follow us here," he said.

Bush said the first step to stabilizing the region is to secure the capital and give the government "political breathing space."

This will allow the government to reconcile internal differences and demonstrate to the locals that the government can work and can produce tangible results. Additional coalition forces will help give the Iraqi government that breathing room.

Other benchmarks met by the Iraqi government include the recent passing of its \$41 billion budget, of which \$10 billion is earmarked for reconstruction and capital investment. Also, lawmakers there are working to pass an oil revenue law that will give the Iraqi people a stake in the country's oil future, Bush said.

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"The operation to secure Baghdad is going to take time, and there will be violence. These are people that will kill innocent men, women and children to achieve their object, to discourage the Iraqi people, to foment sectarian violence, and to, frankly, discourage us from helping this government do its job."

U.S. President George W. Bush

Q & A - Commandant, Iraqi Army Engineer School

The Iraqi Army Engineer School at Camp Taji, Iraq is the primary center for training Iraq's servicemembers to plan, design, build, and maintain the army's infrastructure and field exercises in support of its mission. Iraqi Army Staff Colonel Alaa, commander of the Engineer School in Taji, spoke to *The Advisor* late last year on how the school equips Iraqi servicemembers to undertake engineering tasks for their units and how this training will help build Iraq's infrastructure.

Q: What is the mission of the school?

A: Our mission is to train soldiers in basic engineering ideas so these soldiers can go back to their units and do work like building roads, constructing and maintaining buildings and the necessary structures that an army base needs for its operation. They also learn how to make checkpoints and put up concertina wire. Our school also teaches them how to do plumbing, cement work, and painting and they learn to use the heavy equipment.

Why is this school important for Iraq's security?

As you know, engineering is important because the army must build bases and all the roads and buildings that support the army's operations. This school teaches (engineering principles) so the soldiers can go back to their divisions and do this work so the army can do its duty.

How many students are trained at the Engineer School?

In recent weeks, we had 300 students going through three classes at the same time. We have 247 students in the essential courses and 27 in the maintenance course. There are eight in the operations course. Our school can train up to 500 students.

How is the curriculum structured?

The courses are made up of two sections: Phase I and Phase II. They can then

go back to their unit or continue with specialized courses in heavy equipment.

How is the training structured?

We have courses in engineering for soldiers that have come directly from basic training and who will be here two months in order to finish Phase I and Phase II of training. Phase I trains basic carpentry, electrical, masonry and plumbing and Phase II is more advanced. There are also road building classes – basic and advanced for soldiers that have been sent here by their commands to continue with this training. We have essential courses for soldiers and the (Officer Basic Course) for officers of captain and below. We also have courses for the major and battalion commander ranks.

What new plans do you have for the school?

We have opened a new maintenance facility where we will use the experience of our soldiers and officers to do the maintenance of our building and our equipment. Before, three companies would repair our equipment. Now, we expect that in one year our soldiers will be able to do all the maintenance and repair of the facility and equipment.

Could you share some of the school's history with us?

Before we had two schools. One each for officers and soldiers, but now both officers and enlisted attend the same school. The Engineer School is located here in Taji and we also have a Bomb Disposal School located in Basrah.

How do the students react to the training?

The students enjoy the practical training. They work with pleasure and we give them specific and interesting information that advances their field training exercises.

What are the major challenges facing your school?

One major issue is lack of payment.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

The Iraqi Army Engineer School at Taji. (Editor's note: Colonel Alaa's picture is not shown for security reasons.)

The soldiers now attending have not been paid two months and we must take care of our soldiers. We must help them and resolve the pay issue in order to prepare these soldiers to fight. Another challenge is limited personnel. As an example, we have many vehicles but only five qualified drivers to drive them. I have made two recommendations to the Ministry of Defence. First, transfer drivers from other divisions here or transfer vehicles to the divisions where they can be used. We need more soldiers and more ranks. We need experienced company commanders with a minimum of two years experience.

What future plans do you have for the school?

I have a dream to change this school into an engineer college or an institute. Because as I see it, every soldier in the Iraqi Army must have knowledge of engineering, some basic and others more advanced. But, every soldier should have a fundamental knowledge of engineering. I have suggested to MOD that we offer our education to all soldiers and officers in the army. ■

Learning urban search and rescue

By U.S. Navy
MC2 Elisandro Diaz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BASRAH, Iraq — Thirty-seven firefighters from throughout Iraq are participating in an urban search and rescue program. The training is building their capacity to enter buildings that have collapsed through man-made or natural disasters to locate and save lives of people buried below the rubble. The training is conducted at the Basrah Training College by an international team of urban search and rescue experts.

The students are firefighters who do not have the knowledge and experience to conduct search and rescue operations and to operate the modern equipment used for this purpose. This training addresses this need, stated Ed McAlpin, Coalition Forces Fire Chief Senior Advisor. He said the 18-day course builds their capacity to undertake search and rescue operations in their communities.

Firefighter Mohammed is more direct,



Firefighters practice bracing and shoring techniques at Basrah Training College Feb. 3.



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

Firefighters practice lifting and moving a 3,000 pound load as part of their urban search and rescue training at Basrah Training College Feb. 3.

with the help of an interpreter, "we train to rescue people," he said.

"This is first quality training. Many terrorists explode peoples' homes that are built of cement and many people have died underneath the rubble because we did not have the skills to search for survivors and rescue them," said Mohammed.

"This ability has not been available to us before in Iraq," said Mohammed.

"After the class the students will go back to their fire departments or to where the Iraqi Civil Defence Directorate instructs them," said Iraqi Firefighter Captain Tileb, with the help of an interpreter.

"We are learning to shore buildings that have been damaged by an explosion to prevent them from coming down while we look for survivors," said Ali, a firefighter attending the course.

Ali pointed out the various methods of shoring which prevent the further collapse of structurally weakened walls. He also described how to brace several floors with multiple wood structures, each one supporting the floor above in the same location as the bracing structures on top.

As part of the Search and Rescue

Course, and to meet international training requirements, firefighters go through First-Aid training, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and hazardous materials familiarization. Their training continues with tool and equipment operation, shoring, bracing, heavy lifting and moving. The course culminates with a simulated search for survivors utilizing all the skills they have acquired during the course.

An international cast of firefighters experienced in search and rescue, have trained the Iraqi firefighters in methods and in equipment that will give them the ability to conduct these operations.

"The training is to provide a new capability and new equipment, training they've never had before," said McAlpin.

McAlpin explained that the program trains the Iraqi firefighters to assess a collapsed building's structural integrity so they can implement the correct steps to make it safe before entering to search for survivors. Masonry is the primary material of building construction in Iraq and also heavy, making the safety of rescue workers a big concern.

See RESCUE, Page 6

Overcoming language barrier first step for Iraq's new air force officers

By U.S. Air Force
Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq — In a small room crammed with desks and chairs inside of a large hangar at New Al Muthana Air Base in Baghdad, a small group of young officers enunciating vowels and reciting grammar examples represent the future of the Iraqi Air Force.

The students, who are learning English from Coalition civilian contractors, are new officers in the country's air force and aspire to become pilots and engineers where the ability to speak, read and understand English is a necessity.

Like many Iraqis, the students learned some English in school but the lessons were primary and provided only a basic foundation, according to Saif, one of the students who hopes to become a pilot in the future.

"(Even though we knew some English from past lessons), we cannot speak fluently because we were unable to speak with foreign people. An American English teacher is important because all of our teachers were Iraqi. There was no talking, only writing. We need to talk to really learn."

There is an important reason why the Coalition is so adamant on teaching the officers, according to Brenda Brewer, a deployed civilian language instructor from the Defense Language Institute in San Antonio, who teaches Saif's class.

"The international standards for flight are in English and a lot of flight and maintenance manuals are in English. Mechanics, flight engineers, pilots, all of these men here, will be in those jobs eventually. So, we are starting their language training to get them up to a level before they go on to additional training," she said.

The need for new pilots who understand English is very high, according to a Coalition official who serves as a liaison between the Iraqi and Coalition Air Forces.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Willson

An Iraqi Air Force officer listens as his English instructor, Brenda Brewer from the Defense Language Institute of San Antonio, carries on a conversation with another student.

"If you look at the ages of today's Iraqi Air Force pilots, the 'youngest' pilot is 41," said Lt. Col. Steven Hardy, a program director for the Coalition Air Force Transition Team. "A lot of these pilots studied in the United States and Britain to learn English and are tremendous aviators. However, we realize that we need to grow a new crop of young pilots as the Iraqi Air Force continues to grow. This is part of that program."

Another of the students who goes by the nickname of "Steve" explained how important it was for him and his classmates to learn the language.

"We must learn English because the Iraqi Air Force is at the beginning and we are the first cycle of engineers and pilots," he said.

Other ways Iraq's military is grooming the new pilots is through a program to train air force cadets at the Iraqi Military Academy Al-Rustamiyah. The first class of cadets began training last month and will graduate next year from the academy

that has been training army officers since 1921.

Additionally, flight schools will soon be established at Kirkuk and Taji. The prospective pilots will be trained on fixed wing aircraft like the service's C-130 and Samba 2000 aircraft or rotary wing aircraft that includes JetRanger, Huey II and Mi-17 helicopters, Hardy said.

But before getting into the cockpit, all officers will be required to complete some prerequisites prior to flying.

The language course is scheduled to take three or four months, several months shorter than the standard course length taught back at the DLI base in San Antonio, Brewer noted.

"Usually the training is longer, but we can't have them any longer than what we get them for. The (Iraqi) government wants them at their next training," she added.

See LANGUAGE, Page 7

Learning new skill sets to save lives

From RESCUE, Page 4

McAlpin described that Coalition forces have provided more than \$1.2 million dollars in equipment to conduct the training. The course culminates with a skill set evaluation and written exam. A certificate from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress is awarded to those that receive a passing grade of 70 percent or better.

McAlpin explained that most of the firefighters attending the course have attained a skill level of Firefighter 1 and 2. He said the levels were based on the National Fire Protection Association training classifications in the United States.

McAlpin discussed how the students are learning to conduct search and rescue but also how to use the equipment because it is all new to them. He cites as an example that they have not had the

opportunity to use circular wood saws before this class.

"It's all new to them," said McAlpin.

McAlpin is part of an international team of Coalition advisors that includes two members from the United States and two from Bolivia who are experienced in urban search and rescue.

McAlpin explained one exercise that tests the team's coordination and organization – the lifting and moving of a 3,000 pound block of cement – about equal in weight to a medium sized truck. The firefighters lifted the block without using modern, pneumatic jacks. Instead they used simple mechanical methods of leverage to practice fundamental lifting principles.

The exercise prepares the firefighters should they ever be in a situation where power tools are inaccessible or not available, McAlpin said.

Because of the heavy weight, the team coordinated the lifting using proper safety techniques to lift the weight. The exercise also builds trust and reliance between the teammates.

"It's also a good team-building exercise," said McAlpin.

The equipment the firefighters are learning to use includes jackhammers, pneumatic mattresses, search cameras and listening devices. The cameras, at a cost of \$18,000 each, are capable of extending 10 feet, which will allow the firefighters to search for survivors buried deep within the rubble. The listening devices allow them to pick up faint sounds of life – tools that were previously unavailable to Iraq's firefighters, McAlpin said.

Tileb noted how the equipment they are learning to use is very modern. It will greatly increase their ability to find and rescue people but it will also be used to train other firefighters in their methods and use.

"The equipment is easy to use and after this training, I will go back to my station in my city to train others with the new knowledge and skills."

"I also want to continue developing new ways of rescuing people for Iraq's



Photos by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

A firefighting team cuts lumber for a structural bracing and shoring exercise at Basrah Training College Feb. 3.

Civil Defence and I want to see us working together with our neighbors (countries) and the United States and Britain," Tileb said.

Mohammed shared that he and his fellow firefighters have grave concerns for their personal safety (from terrorists) but are committed to the building of a better Iraq.

"My family is very proud of me because I will be one of the first (firefighters) in Iraq to earn this certificate - we are the key to the future – right now I am a trainee but later I will train hundreds," said Mohammed.



A firefighter cuts through a cement block as part of their urban search and rescue training exercises at Basrah Training College Feb. 3.

"We train to rescue people...this ability has not been available to us before."
Mohammed, Iraqi Firefighter

Officers learn English as first step to careers

From LANGUAGE, Page 5

The English language course is based on a curriculum that uses a 34 book set created by DLI. Due to the shortened time frame, the class will not make it through the whole set, but their command of the language continues to progress rapidly, Brewer said.

"I believe I have learned a lot here," Saif said. "American English is a little different from what we have learned before. I would like to complete all of the DLI books, (but because of the short time-frame,) we want to finish 18 or 20 of the books quickly.

Saif's class has gone through four language training books in the past two weeks. The standard at DLI in San Antonio is one book a week.

"They won't let me slow down," Brewer said. "These gentlemen already know the alphabet, numbers and basic vocabulary in English, but in two weeks they have really started to put it together."

Saif says the difference has been the interaction between the class and the teacher and also with each other in English only.

"We have learned new vocabulary and grammar from the beginning, but we also like to just sit and talk about things to practice," he said.

His instructor beamed after he made the statement. "Two weeks ago he



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Willson

Brenda Brewer, a language instructor, discusses current events with her Iraqi class Feb. 12. The air force officers must learn English before embarking on their careers as pilots, mechanics and engineers in the Iraqi Air Force.

couldn't have had any conversation with you. None of them could even speak to me and now we talk about a variety of things," she said.

The reasons why the students are so dedicated to progressing through training to one day commanding the skies above

Iraq are clear to the entire class.

"We have a sense of patriotism and love of Iraq," Steve said.

Brewer agreed.

"These are all extremely focused, highly motivated young men who know they are the future of Iraq."

President outlines reasons why plan must succeed

From BUSH, Page 2

This progress, he added, will deliver tangible results to the Iraqi people that will demonstrate the government there can work.

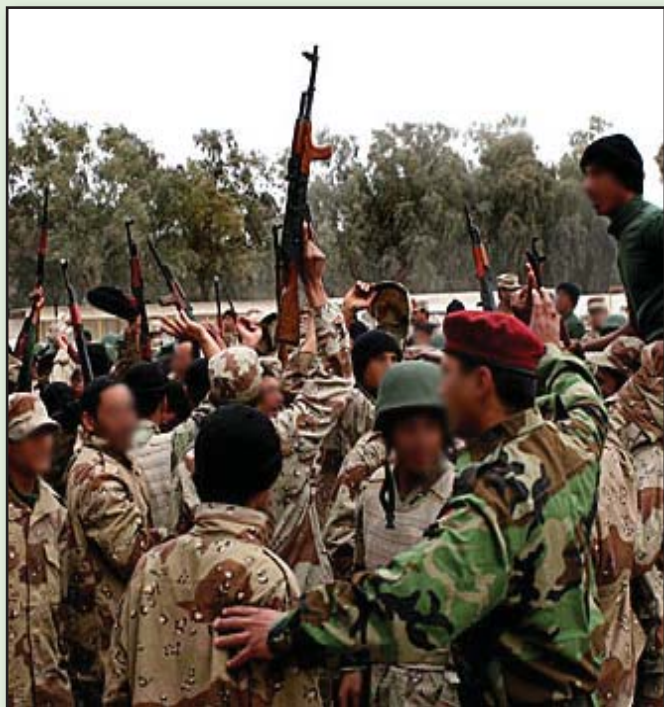
Right now, the timing of Coalition forces is on schedule to give Petraeus the forces he needs, when he needs them, Bush said. Coalition forces' initial plans are to begin clearing, holding and rebuilding neighborhoods in city. "We have been good about clearing, but not holding," Bush said.

To help with this, Bush said, he is giving local commanders more flexibility with reconstruction funds and sending more provincial reconstruction teams, so Iraqi people see progress under the new government.



Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Rick Brown

A Coalition advisor discusses operations with Iraqi soldiers during a recent mission in Baghdad's Haifa St. area.



Ready!

HABBANIYAH, Iraq — Nearly 1,000 new Iraqi soldiers graduated from basic training at Camp Habbaniyah Feb. 6. During the five-week training program, the soldiers underwent more than 214 hours of intensive training focusing on combat and life-saving techniques and 30 hours of training in drill and ceremonies. The Iraqis were trained by the camp's Iraqi military training instructors who determine the program's requirements and manage it in all capacities.



Photos by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Andrew M. Kalwitz

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Army captures al-Qaida cell leader

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Division captured a suspected al-Qaida in Iraq cell leader Feb. 15.

The suspect is believed to be responsible for coordinating and carrying out several improvised explosive device and rocket attacks targeting civilians and Iraqi Security Forces in the area.

During the operation, several munitions caches were recovered by Iraqi forces. Munitions confiscated included 12 152mm artillery projectiles, 10 130mm artillery projectiles, five 105mm artillery projectiles, 10 120mm mortar rounds, 15 82mm mortar rounds, 10 60mm mortar rounds, 23 anti-tank mines, explosives and detonation cord.

The operation was planned and conducted by 5th Iraqi Army Division forces. Coalition forces accompanied the Iraqi force in an advisory role.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi, Coalition forces seize caches

LUTIFIYAH — Iraqi and Coalition forces discovered and destroyed two caches of weapons and improvised explosive device-making materials near Lutifiyah Feb. 13.

The combined forces discovered the stockpile west of Lutifiyah while on patrol.

The first cache contained a land mine, a silencer, 20 feet of detonation cord, a nine-volt battery, a washing machine timer, 11 blasting caps, 10 feet of crushed wire, 5,000 rounds of

7.62mm ammunition, five rocket-propelled grenade propellant charges, four RPG rounds, a Dragonov sniper rifle magazine, 60 unlinked rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, 70 linked 5.56mm rounds, six AK-47 magazines, eight black masks, three tactical vests with Iraqi flags on them and a drum of ammunition for a medium machine gun.

The second cache, found nearby, contained 11 RPG rounds with propellant charges and five RPG launchers.

The weapons were seized and destroyed in a controlled detonation.

— *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

Iraqi Army captures weapons cache

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured a large weapons cache during operations with Coalition advisors Feb. 14 in central Baghdad.

Iraqi Forces entered the Barantha Mosque during operations to target illegally armed militia kidnapping, torture and murder activities. The mosque was reportedly used as a place to conduct sectarian violence against Iraqi civilians as well as a safe haven and weapons storage area for illegal militia groups.

During the search, mosque security guards cooperated with Iraqi forces and allowed them to enter without incident. Iraqi forces found and confiscated three heavy machine guns and 80 assault rifles.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*



Courtesy photos

Transfer of authority

Commanding General, Multi-National Force-West, Maj. Gen. W.E. Gaskin, Sr., and Deputy Commanding General, 1st Iraqi Division, Brig. Gen. Baha'a Hussay 'Abd salute while the Iraqi national anthem is played during a Transfer of Authority ceremony in Habbiniyah, Iraq, Feb. 15.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Army detains rogue militia members

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained several suspects Feb. 14 targeting a rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi cell in Al Mashru, south of As Suwayrah.

The operation, conducted with Coalition advisors, targeted members of a rogue JAM element allegedly involved in running a punishment committee in Al Mashru, sectarian kidnapping and murder of Iraqi civilians as well as the assassination of several Iraqi Policemen.

The cell is also suspected of involvement in numerous improvised explosive device attacks as well as small-arms and machine-gun attacks on Iraqi Security and Coalition forces in the area.

Iraqi forces detained two suspects at one location and were moving to another location when they received small-arms fire from two hostile fighters outside the structure. Iraqi forces returned fire against the threat, causing the two fighters to surrender. They were detained by Iraqi forces.

Iraqi soldiers received additional small-arms fire from hostile fighters located within the structure.

Iraqi forces entered the building, cleared two rooms and detained several individuals. Entering a third room, the Iraqi soldiers again received small-arms fire from hostile fighters located inside.

The soldiers returned fire and killed one hostile fighter.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Army forces kills terrorists, captured others

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Army forces killed four armed terrorists in a confrontation in al-Sina'a neighborhood in Ba'qubah Feb. 14.

Four others were captured in al-Muqdadiya while emplacing improvised explosive devices.

In other operations in Diyala Province, Iraqi soldiers captured 14 terrorists in Jalawla, and 10 others in Baladrouz, including a cameraman suspected of filming terrorist operations.

— *Iraqi Ministry of Defense Public Affairs*

Iraqi Army captures militia member

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured an alleged member of a rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi militia during operations with Coalition advisors Feb. 13 in northern Baghdad.

The suspect was believed responsible for kidnapping, torture and murder of Iraqi citizens and security forces in the area.

The Iraqi-led and planned operation was targeting a rogue JAM cell operating against civilians and Iraqi Police in the Salih Hassan area of north-central Baghdad. Ten other persons were detained for further questioning by Iraqi forces.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

VBIED blows up, kills its makers

BAGHDAD — Six terrorist were killed when a car blew up as they were making a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Ein al-Saba' village in Mandali of Diyala Province.

After the explosion, an Iraqi Army security force responded to the site and found one Austrian-made artillery projectile ready to be used with nine batteries.

No civilian or Iraq forces casualties were reported.

— *Iraqi Ministry of Defense Public Affairs*

Special Forces capture weapons supplier

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured a suspected weapons supplier and financier of sectarian violence conducted by rogue Jaysh Al Mahdi cells.

The capture occurred during operations with Coalition advisors Feb. 13 in Raminiya, in northern Baghdad.

Iraqi forces detained an additional person for questioning.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Army troops return 20 displaced families

BAGHDAD — Units from the Iraqi Army in Diyala province, with cooperation and coordination from the heads of local tribes, returned 20 displaced families to their houses in al-Wajhiya area Feb. 10.

The Iraqi soldiers took procedures to provide security for these families during the operation.

— *Iraqi Ministry of Defense Public Affairs*



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

Airpower

An Iraqi C-130 Hercules takes off from Baghdad's New Al-Muthanna Airport as a U.S. Air Force C-130 taxis to the adjacent Baghdad International Airport.